

July 23, 1999

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL DRUG FILE (NDF) SOFTWARE

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive informs facilities that the National Drug File (NDF) Software Version 4.0 must be installed at all sites no later than August 1, 1999, and all future versions of the software within 30 days of release.

2. BACKGROUND: The NDF software module provides non-intrusive standardization of the local drug files in all Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers. Standardization includes the adoption of new drug nomenclature and drug classification, and links the local drug files entries to data in the NDF. This standardization is necessary to communicate medication usage with other governmental and non-governmental healthcare organizations. These Standards will be used for future billing applications and communication with Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) software.

***NOTE:** Included in the NDF are the VA adopted Drug-Drug interaction and ingredient files. These files provide the basis for error checking concerning medications in all Veterans Health Information Systems Technology Architecture (VISTA) software.*

3. POLICY: VA facilities will activate this software no later August 1, 1999. All future versions of the NDF software will be installed within 30 days of release by the Office of the Chief Information Officer (19). Interim releases of NDF data will be installed within 7 days of release. Data releases are anticipated on a monthly basis.

4. ACTION

a. **Responsibilities** Pharmacy service managers will meet with the responsible Information Management official to ensure the NDF software is installed.

b. **Procedures**

(1) Install the software according to instructions provided in the installation guide.

(2) Match existing local drug file to NDF entries.

5. REFERENCES: None.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Chief Consultant, Pharmacy Benefits Management Strategic Health Group (119), is responsible for the content of this Directive.

THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES JULY 31, 2004

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7. RESCISSIONS. This VHA Directive will expire July 31, 2004.

S/ M. L. Murphy for
Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Acting Under Secretary for Health

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